

State Wildlife Grants Program

Iowa Call for Pre-proposals

I. Background and Purpose of Program

The State Wildlife Grants (SWG) program was created by Congress to protect and manage species of greatest conservation need (SGCN). The purpose of the program is to support projects that help prevent SGCN from declining further or becoming threatened or endangered. Comparable federal efforts exist for state fish and wildlife agencies for sport fish (e.g. Dingell-Johnson program) and game species (e.g. Pittman-Robertson program).

The primary focus of the program in Iowa is on non-game fish and wildlife. Federal funding is annually apportioned to the states from Congress in a formula based on land area (1/3) and population (2/3). No State (or territory) receives more than 5% or less than 1% of the total available funding. The SWG program provides annual appropriations to the state wildlife agencies for the management, protection, and conservation of SGCN. Between 2000 and 2008, more than \$485 million has been earmarked for conservation funding.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), through a steering committee comprised of various partner organizations, developed a “Wildlife Action Plan” (IWAP) (http://www.iowadnr.com/wildlife/files/IAcomprehensive_plan.html). The IWAP was a requirement of the SWG program and identifies Iowa’s SGCN. The IWAP also identifies Iowa’s habitats and ranks stresses facing our SGCN and their habitats, as well as suggesting conservation actions that may help in preserving these species. The general public provided input on the IWAP before it was submitted to the US Department of the Interior. The IWAP was formally approved in August, 2006, allowing Iowa to continue receiving SWG funds.

II. Applicant Eligibility

IDNR is seeking proposals for conservation organizations and universities to receive a portion of the SWG program funds for research projects through this competitive granting process.

III. Project Eligibility

Projects must focus on research for the conservation and management of Iowa’s SGCN which includes species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, butterflies, dragonflies, terrestrial snails, and mollusks. Projects should emphasize Iowa’s SGCN

and have a duration of 1 to 3 years. Projects concerning other organisms not currently listed as SGCN (e.g. crayfish or ants) may be considered, depending on funding availability and the strength of the proposed project provided that the project will address the question of whether the species should be considered for SGCN status in Iowa. Refer to the Pre-Proposal Application Guidelines for information on the required elements of the pre-proposals.

Appropriate projects include those that:

- Benefit native species or assemblages of Iowa's SGCN and their habitats
- Inform management decisions for Iowa's SGCN
- Include implementation activities (e.g. population monitoring, laboratory and field research, management, technical guidance, etc.)
- Examine factors that may contribute to the decline of SGCN and habitat
- Improve data to determine status and distribution of SGCN, as well as developing conservation recommendations, through surveys, inventories, and monitoring projects (the Iowa DNR has a monitoring program developed, please contact IDNR to ensure that a proposed monitoring design would mesh with the statewide program)
- All proposals must clearly define how the proposed objective(s) address 1 or more of the conservation actions listed in IWAP

Projects focusing on law enforcement, education, and recreation are not eligible for funding under the federal SWG program guidelines.

IV. Funding Constraints

Legislation requires a 1:1 match for implementation projects and a 3:1 match for planning projects. Planning projects are defined as those that are comprised of:

- Efforts to update, modify, or revise the IWAP
- Efforts to collect public opinion information or input (polling, surveys, public meetings, etc.) that will be used to update or modify IWAP
- Processes (e.g. coordination meetings between the state and its partners) to build or strengthen collaborations as the IWAP is being updated or modified.

At this time, we are not taking applications for planning projects. All projects that do not focus on one of the above are deemed "implementation" projects and require the 1:1 match.

The match for the federal funds may be through either state or private funding. Proposals listing contributions (e.g. volunteer services, equipment, etc.) must adhere to federal guidelines on eligible match (as defined in 43 CFR Part 12.64). Successful applicants will be considered sub-grantees of the IDNR and must agree to follow all federal laws and requirements. No matching monies are available from the IDNR for

2010. For 2010, the minimum funding request to be considered will be \$25,000 and the maximum request for a 3-year study will be \$150,000 total. This means that the total project costs (including the match) must be between \$50,000 and \$300,000 (although could exceed with through additional match monies) to be eligible for consideration.

These federal funds are available on a reimbursement only basis. Costs accrued prior to grant approval by the US Fish and Wildlife Service are not eligible for use as match or reimbursement. Federal funds cannot be matched with other federal funds.

V. Reporting Requirements

Project investigators must submit annual financial reports, matching the expense categories listed in the proposed budget, as a component of annual progress reports (for projects lasting longer than 1 year), final reports, AND electronic copies of the data to the IDNR. Reports can be submitted electronically. Annual and final reports should be in scientific format including abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, and literature cited. Annual progress reports should also list to-date accomplishments and justify any needed changes to the approach or budget.

Prior to the first field season, an in-depth document describing methods and timeline must be provided to the IDNR. In addition, IDNR personnel may conduct on-site visits or schedule meetings with the primary investigator(s) to monitor project progress.

VI. Selection Criteria and Process

Project pre-proposals will be ranked by the following selection criteria:

- Proposed achievement of multiple management objectives and tangible benefits
 - Emphasis of the proposal on the IWAP conservation action(s)
 - Emphasis of the proposal on the conservation needs of SGCN
 - Incorporation of multiple SGCN into the proposal objectives
 - Incorporation of priority conservation areas into the proposal
 - Ability of proposal to provide the greatest return per dollar invested (versus those with excessive indirect costs)
 - Reasonableness of project timeline and budget
 - Involvement of multiple partners
 - Adherence to format and application guidelines
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- Additional consideration may be given to proposals emphasizing species and/or areas of interest highlighted on the SWG RFP homepage. These species and areas are listed under the heading “Current Research Needs”.

Pre-proposal applications will be reviewed by an IDNR review committee and will be scored based upon adherence to guidelines, project eligibility, incorporation of selection criteria, and current management and research needs. A subset of the pre-proposal applicants will then be invited to submit full proposals for consideration. The full proposals will be reviewed by an IDNR review committee. Partial funding may be awarded to proposed projects if sufficient SWG funds are not available and it is believed that the project can still be successful with reduced funding.

VII. Submission Deadline

All funding awards are dependent upon federal appropriations.

Pre-proposal grant applications should be received by 5pm, September 28, 2009. Applications received after this date (or incomplete applications) will not be considered for funding. Applications may be sent electronically (preferred) or by mail. A confirmation of receipt will be sent to the applicant.

Send pre-proposal applications to:

Doug Harr
Wildlife Diversity Program Coordinator
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
1436 255th Street
Boone, IA 50036
Phone: (515) 432-2823 ext. 102
Doug.Harr@dnr.iowa.gov

VIII. Award Notification

Successful applicants will be invited to submit full proposals with the full proposals due December 15th, 2009. Following IDNR acceptance, successful applicants may need additional work (with help from IDNR) to submit an application for federal approval.

IX. Availability of Funds

Funds are expected to be available by August 15, 2010, but are contingent upon approval by the USFWS and the availability of federal appropriations. Only costs and contributions accrued during the grant period are reimbursable and must have federal approval prior to the initiation of the grant period.